

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE BROWN COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD

A special meeting was held on **July 23, 2015** at **4:00 p.m.** at the **Brown County Central Library, 515 Pine Street, Green Bay, WI**

**PRESENT:** KATHY PLETCHER, CHAD BIANCHI, CARLA BUBOLTZ, NATHAN JESKE, and JOHN VAN DYCK

**EXCUSED:** BOB NIELSEN, TIM NIXON, VICKY VAN VONDEREN and CHRISTOPHER WAGNER

**ALSO PRESENT:** Brian Simons, Lori Denault, Sue Lagerman, and Becky Phillips (staff). John Fenner, Green Bay; Scott Vanidestine, Green Bay; Wendy Willens, Green Bay; Jennifer Jacobson-Carew, Green Bay; WLUK-FOX 11; Doug Schneider, Green Bay Press-Gazette; Bill Meindl, Green Bay Development News; Brown County Supervisors Harold Kaye, Guy Zima, Corrie Campbell, Staush Gruyszinski, and Pat Evans.

### CALL TO ORDER

President Kathy Pletcher called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

### I. APPROVE/MODIFY AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda. Motion by C. Buboltz, seconded by J. Van Dyck, to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

### II. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON AMENDING THE 2016 LIBRARY BUDGET PROPOSAL

The Library Board, at their meeting on July 16, reviewed three budget options. The Optimum budget option creates a structural deficit and the other two options require cuts (eliminating staff, cutting the book budget, closing the Southwest Branch and/or closing branches on weekends) to meet the levy amount given by the County Executive. To be clear the Optimum budget is only adequate. It is not extravagant. It would not provide unnecessary services like supplying a county-wide Netflix and Hulu accounts. It is merely adequate to provide a level of service of respectable quality. The Board reluctantly adopted the Southwest Closure Budget to show a balanced budget.

After a meeting with the County Executive, who opposes closing the Southwest Branch Library, a new budget option was created to align with additional funding the County Executive agreed to find. This 'Bare Bones Budget' requires an additional \$160,000 in funding. This new option provides for the Southwest Branch to be open in 2016 at the cost of moving other long-term needs to be addressed in future years. However, it provides a year to examine a long-term solution to the operating funding of the entire Brown County Library System.

C. Buboltz reminded that the Board passed a structural deficit in 2015 and they were not interested in doing that again. If this Bare Bones option passes it looks like the Board is passing another budget with a structural deficit. K. Pletcher had talked to Troy Streckenbach who indicated that he would have the levy amount raised to meet this shortfall and balance it.

Buboltz went on to remind that the 2015 budget was passed with the caveat if that level of funding wasn't maintained something would have to be done. This is only a short-term fix. K. Pletcher talked to T. Streckenbach about working towards a long-term plan since making these decisions ad hoc isn't a good way to do business. People need our library services and the Board does not want to be in this position every year. It would be beneficial to have both the public and county supervisors involved in the process to make a long-term plan a reality.

C. Buboltz noted that the library, again, is cutting its heart and soul to balance the budget – this is really an attack on the library's whole purpose. J. Van Dyck asked for confirmation that the county appropriation would be increased and it was reiterated that it would be.

County Supervisor Pat Evans asked if the option to close the Southwest Branch came from the County Executive. K. Pletcher replied that the decision was made by the Library Board and Library staff. A variety of options were explored and studies were done using actual data. Additionally, there are two other branches within 2 miles from the Southwest Branch that can fulfill the library needs of taxpayers. The City of Green Bay has three libraries. The East Branch has heavier use and is more distant from Central. The same rationale had been used to consider its closing instead, but closing the Southwest Branch is more logical.

Supervisor Evans questioned who the Library Board answers to and stated if the Board is truly independent then they should stand up to the County Executive and say that no branches will be closed and send the budget amount back for reconsideration. Otherwise, he indicated the Board is just doing the County Executive's bidding. Evans stated that the County Board has been very supportive of the library and the Library Board should take the position of the County Board not the County Executive.

J. Van Dyck responded to Supervisor Evans that this is just the beginning of the process – the budget can and likely will change. The Library Board facilitated the request of the County Executive under certain parameters. The budgets will end up before Ed & Rec where they will be tweaked and then to the County Board where they likely will be tweaked again.

Supervisor Corrie Campbell asked about other options taken. She asked if the Library Board was informed of the RFPs for the expansion of the Southwest Branch. J. Van Dyck replied that the Board does not control the levy amount. The only option was to find \$330,000 and staffing is 65% of the budget.

Supervisor Guy Zima stated that he is tired of the Southwest Branch and the Bookmobile being a political football. He stressed that the County Executive is not the final arbitrator – the County Board is and they have been extremely sympathetic to library. He thought this whole idea was put to bed. The community is interested in preserving it; it is efficient and it is used and loved by area residents; and libraries help stabilize neighborhoods.

Supervisor Zima went on to say that the Library Board is an independent board and felt the budget options were not very imaginative. K. Pletcher commented that it is understood that this is the first step. J. Van Dyck asked Supervisor Zima if it is his suggestion that the Library Board should have passed a budget with a \$330,000 deficit. The revenue line is frozen until the County Board decides. Is it better to pass a budget with a deficit and advance it to Ed & Rec and then if the library doesn't get an increase present what cuts have to be made to balance the budget?

J. Van Dyck asked if branch services and the book budget can't be cut where do you find \$330,000. Supervisor Zima answered that you have to tighten the belt a little bit all over - tell the staff to squeeze. If you need extra dollars – come and fight for them. The County Board listens and is reasonable. This issue has to be resolved in a better way. He indicated this is a real blow to his and Supervisor Kaye's efforts.

Supervisor Harold Kaye commented that no one wants to shut the branch down but this process has to be gone through. He suggested moving forward on developing a long-term plan. He noted that he is not happy with the County Executive's way of doing this. Favorable bids for expansion have been received and much remodeling has been done recently to the Southwest Branch.

Supervisor Staush Gruyszinski stated that cutting the Southwest Branch sounds tone-deaf to what Ed & Rec is trying to accomplish.

C. Buboltz commented that her understanding is that Supervisors Evans and Zima are saying that it is the Library Board's prerogative to set a budget. If \$160,000 is going to be allocated to meet the bare bones budget then the Library Board should forward the optimum budget.

**Motion** by J. Van Dyck, seconded by N. Jeske, to adopt the original optimum budget including recurring costs (\$17,114) for the Southwest Branch Library and to forward to the County Executive with a request of an additional \$330,080 (\$312,966 + 17,114) in county appropriations. **Motion carried.**

Lastly, Supervisor Zima commented that he wants the Southwest Branch off the table. He told the Library Board to come with a cooperative attitude to the County Board and expressed his disappointment with staff.

**III. SUCH OTHER MATTERS AS ARE AUTHORIZED BY LAW** None.

**IV. ADJOURNMENT Motion** by N. Jeske, seconded by C. Bianchi, to adjourn the meeting. **Motion carried.**

The meeting adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

**NEXT REGULAR MEETING**

**August 20, 2015**

**Central Library 515 Pine Street, downtown Green Bay  
5:15 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Christopher Wagner, Library Board Secretary  
Sue Lagerman, Recording Secretary